

## JUDICIARY

DATE 2-5-02

[illegible]

**MONTANA STATE SENATE  
2007 LEGISLATURE**

**VISITOR REGISTER**

**JUDICIARY**

DATE 2-5-07

BILLS BEING HEARD TODAY SB 323

**PLEASE PRINT**

NAME	PHONE	REPRESENTING	BILL #	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
Mr K Cross	434-3201	Montana NMHC	SB323	X	
Nadine Little Plume	338-5255	Blackfeet Nation	SB323	X	
Edwin Sney Little Plume	338-5251	Blackfeet Tribe Council	SB323	X	
Charles Kari	338-2245	" " " " " " " "	SB323	X	
Nancy Maynard	454-2171	Great Falls Clinic	SB323		X
Bob Maynard	454-2171	Great Falls Clinic	SB323		X
STEVEN CHRZANKOWSKI	454-2171	GREAT FALLS CLINIC	SB323		X
Tim Roy	454-2171	Great Falls Clinic	SB323		X
Steven Akre	468-3409	Great Falls Clinic	SB323		✓
Jerry Spier	771-7306	Great Falls Clinic	SB323		✓
K. Kubicke	442-3570	Montana Medical Assoc.	SB323		✓
Cherry Loney	727-4847	Community Health Care Center	SB323	X	
Vicki Blatzgabel	455-5410	Benefis Healthcare	SB323	X	
Chris Belong	454-3517	Benefis Healthcare	SB323	X	
M. L. L. L. L.	412-5581	GFC	SB323		✓
Bela (M. L. L. L.)	442-7777	(M. L. L. L.) * for M. L. L. L. L.	SB323		✓
Ronda Wiggers	899-3659	Gr. Falls Chamber of Commerce	SB323	X	
John Goodnow	455-5469	Benefis Healthcare	SB323	X	
Moe Wosolka	442-5761	Montana Catholic Conference	SB323	X	
Arny Ashin	788-0461	Benefis HC	SB323	X	
Pennis Peterson	455-5841	Benefis HC	SB323	X	

**PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH COMMITTEE SECRETARY**



Marigail Schreiner 303A

**Patti Liston**

**From:** "Patti Liston" <pliston1@bresnan.net>  
**To:** <lyndamoss@iml.net>  
**Cc:** <larry@iml.net>; <csjuneau@3rivers.net>; <oneil@centurytel.net>; <perrysd35@aol.com>; <daveew@gmail.com>; <cwilliams@montanadsl.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 01, 2007 9:25 PM  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 323

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My wife and I would like to solicit your support for Senate Bill 323 which will sunset the Certificate of Public Advantage (COPA) related to Benefis Healthcare in Great Falls. My wife and I have worked for Benefis Healthcare since it was formed in 1996. My wife started working for Montana Deaconess Medical Center as a Clinical Laboratory Scientist (Medical Technologist) around 1980. I started my career at Columbus Hospital in 1971 when I began my training at the Columbus Hospital School of Radiologic Technology. After graduating in 1973 I was hired as a staff technologist with teaching responsibilities in the school. In 1975 I became the Program Director for the School of Radiologic Technology and have held that position ever since.

The COPA was put in place in 1996 when Columbus Hospital and Montana Deaconess Medical Center merged to form Benefis Healthcare. The COPA was designed to provide state government oversight to prevent the new hospital from exerting its ability to regulate healthcare prices and services as the sole provider of healthcare service in the Great Falls area. As you are probably aware, Benefis Healthcare is no longer the only hospital in Great Falls, but it is the only one in Montana regulated by a COPA. Benefis Healthcare is not like its "for profit" competition in that it does not have the ability to "cherry pick" which patients it will admit and treat at its facility. The competing hospital has the ability to determine which patients it will refer to its own facility and which it will treat at Benefis Healthcare. It does not make financial sense to perform expensive surgical procedures on patients who have no insurance or very limited ability to pay at your own facility and take a loss if you are a "for profit" operation. In fact it would make more sense to send them to your competition after hours so that they not only take the financial loss from not getting fully reimbursed for the cost of the procedure, but they also have to pay their employees overtime wages to perform the procedure. In addition to the loss of surgical procedures to the new surgical hospital, Benefis Healthcare also provides the only Emergency Room and Renal Dialysis services in the Great Falls area. Both of these services are a necessary part of the healthcare delivery system it provides to northcentral Montana, but they do not provide income for the hospital. The COPA slants the field of competition in favor of the "for profit" surgical hospital due to the fact that it does not have the same regulatory oversight. Having the COPA in place also affects the ability of Benefis Healthcare to arrange financing for major improvements at the lowest possible cost to the hospital. It is estimated that the cost to Benefis Healthcare for COPA regulation compliance and extra loan interest due to the COPA will be approximately \$880,00.00 per year. This is money that could be better spent on improving the delivery of healthcare for the citizens of Montana. Benefis Healthcare has strived to provide high quality healthcare services throughout its history and its success in doing so is shown through the numerous nationally recognized awards it has received. This bill is not asking for anything other than to allow Benefis Healthcare to compete on equal ground with its competition. Please show your support for a community asset and help to sunset something that has outlived its need. Please support Senate Bill 323.

Sincerely,

Tom and Patti Liston  
3529 8th Avenue South  
Great Falls, Montana 59405  
(406) 761-1352

*Patti Liston*  
*Tom Liston*

2/1/2007

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## FAX TRANSMITTAL

Date: February 1, 2007

To: Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Kelly Michel  
Benefis Healthcare

Re: Support SB 323 - Sunset the COPA

Dear Senator:

We need your support of SB 323 to sunset the COPA. This is an urgent matter. Here are a few facts regarding COPA you need to know.

- The Certificate of Public Advantage (COPA) was created over ten years ago when Benefis Healthcare had no competition. Since then, the healthcare landscape has changed dramatically. The Great Falls Clinic has partnered with Essentia Health—a massive multi-state healthcare system—and opened up a for-profit specialty hospital in Great Falls.
- Benefis accepts this competition will remain. But the COPA—which was designed for a hospital with no competition – is now more punitive to Benefis and slants the playing field in favor of the for-profit specialty hospital.
- Benefis has gone on record and will keep its prices in the lower half of hospital prices in Montana. Even without the COPA.
- The COPA is expensive and Benefis and the patients it serves pay the direct costs of the regulation. In addition, the COPA will impact Benefis' bond rating. The costs of the COPA regulation compliance and extra interest combined total approximately \$880,000 per year. Thus the COPA diverts funds away from healthcare delivery throughout the region and increases healthcare costs in Great Falls.
- Many other hospitals throughout the state have no competition within their cities – but they are not subject to a COPA. Benefis is the only hospital in Montana subject to a COPA, and the Benefis COPA is one of only three COPA's left in the United States. All others have expired. COPA's are known throughout the healthcare industry as "regulatory dinosaurs."
- Benefis has gone above and beyond all the requirements set forth in the COPA. Without the COPA Benefis would still be regulated by JCAHO, CMS, OIG, and many other agencies – just like every other hospital in Montana.

**Benefis must be granted relief from the COPA. Please Support SB 323 - and sunset the COPA.**

# WITNESS STATEMENT

**COMMENTS:**

**PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH COMMITTEE SECRETARY**

# WITNESS STATEMENT

DO YOU: SUPPORT \_\_\_\_\_ OPPOSE ✓ AMEND \_\_\_\_\_

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**PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH COMMITTEE SECRETARY**

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DO YOU: SUPPORT \_\_\_\_\_ OPPOSE   X   AMEND \_\_\_\_\_

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MONTANA STATE SENATE  
2007 LEGISLATURE

WITNESS STATEMENT

NAME STEVEN CHRZANOWSKI MD  
ADDRESS 1400 29<sup>th</sup> ST. SOUTH GREAT FALLS 59405  
HOME PHONE 452-4270 WORK PHONE 771-3354  
REPRESENTING GREAT FALLS CITY  
APPEARING ON WHICH PROPOSAL SB 323  
DO YOU: SUPPORT \_\_\_\_\_ OPPOSE X AMEND \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

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# WITNESS STATEMENT

DO YOU: SUPPORT \_\_\_\_\_ OPPOSE ✓ AMEND \_\_\_\_\_

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# WITNESS STATEMENT

**DO YOU:    SUPPORT**       ✓       **OPPOSE**            **AMEND**           

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**COMMENTS:**

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